BOROUGH OF FALMOUTH.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

For the year 1911.

ALEX. GREGOR, M.D., M.O.H.

FALMOUTH:

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BOROUGH OF FALMOUTH.

ANNUAL REPORT.

To the Mayor and Corporation

GENTLEMEN,

I have much pleasure in presenting my Fourth Annual Report on the Health of the Borough.

VITAL STATISTICS.

Births.

The number	of bi	rths re	gister	ea is:—
Males		• • •	• • •	118
Females	• • •	• • •	••	116

234 Total

This gives a birth rate of 17.8 per 1,000, the lowest on record.

Birth rate for the previous five years:— 1907. 1908. 1909. 1910. 1906. 20.44 20.78 22.56 18.91 22.39

Deaths.

Number of illegitimate births ...

Males	• • •		• • •	95
Females	• • •	• • •	• • •	108
	Total	• • •	• • •	208
		7 ,		

Deaths of non-residents:—

14Sailors (on high seas and Sailors' Home)... 11 Total 25

This gives a death rate of 15.45 per 1,000.

Rate for the past five years:—

1908. 1909. 1906. 1907. 1910. 16.96 15.2715.09 14.84 15.26

Infantile Mortality.

The number of deaths under one year was 41, giving a rate of 175.21 per 1,000 births.

Rate for the past five years:—

1908. 1909. 1907. 1910. 127.8286.20 87.12 87.13 87.71

This increase is due to three factors. First, as the infantile death rate is calculated according to the number of births, the lower the number of births, the higher the death rate will be. Secondly, there was a rather severe epidemic of Whooping Cough during the months of March and April, which accounted for eight deaths. Third, the exceptional weather last summer was the cause of an outbreak of summer Diarrheea in the end of July, August and the first half of September. This accounted for twelve deaths.

Zymotic Death Rate.

The deaths from zymotic diseases were as follows:—

> Diphtheria Whooping Cough ... Diarrhœa and Enteritis ... 15Total

This gives a rate of 2.05 per 1,000.

Rate for last five years:—

1906. 1907. 1908. 1909. 1910. 1.10 1.01 1.01 .42 .42

The cause of the increase is the same as the cause in the increase of infantile mortality, viz., Whooping Cough and Diarrhœa.

There were 81 deaths of persons 65 years and over.

Natural Increase.

Total Births 234Total Deaths 203

Natural Increase ... 31

Table for the past five years:—

1906. 1907. 1908. 1909. 1910. 66 43 9266 61

The number this year shows the greatest decline in recent years.

Notifiable Diseases.

The cases reported during the past year were:

Diphtheria	•••	• • •	5
Scarlet Fever	• • •	• • •	7
Enteric Fever	• • •		3
Continued Fever	• • •	• • •	1
Erysipelas	• • •	• • •	3
Pauper Phthisis	• • •	•••	1
Total		• • •	20

Comp	are th	e last five	years:—	
1906.	1907	. 1908.	1909.	1910
100	47	19	10	24

Seeing that Diphtheria was prevalent in the county during the past year, the above figures may be deemed very satisfactory. Two of the cases of Diphtheria were traced to contact outside the Borough, and no two cases occurred in the same house. All the cases were treated with Antitoxin at the expense of the Authority, and the contacts were all given prophylactic doses. I am confident that this method of dealing with the disease mitigates the spread.

Two of the cases of Scarlet Fever were removed to the Isolation Hospital.

Of the Enteric Fever, two cases occurred in one family. The origin of these could not be determined, but the third was clearly shown to be due to eating contaminated shell fish.

All suspected cases of Enteric and Diphsubjected to bacteriological theria are examination. Only one case of Poliomyelitis occurred in the Borough The case was promptly removed to the Isolation Hospital, and every care taken to disinfect the rooms. Eighty-one rooms were disinfected during the past year.

Phthisis and other Tubercular Diseases.

The deaths were:—		
Phthisis		11
Tubercular Meningitis	• • •	1
Other Tubercular Diseases	• • •	1

Total	•	13

This gives a Phthisis death rate of '83, as compared with '84 last year. The rate is, therefore, practically stationary. One case was notified under the Regulations, 1908, and none under the Regulations (Hospital) 1911. The practice of disinfection of rooms after occupation by Phthisical patients is practically now universal. I would again call attention to the great advantage that would accrue from passing a bye-law to prohibit spitting in the streets and public places. This custom, I note, is very common, and every effort should

be made to put an end to this reprehensible and dangerous habit.

Epidemic Diarrhœa Among Children.

The hot and dry summer of the past year was the cause of an outbreak of Diarrhœa and Enteritis, and, in consequence, caused a serious child mortality. The number of deaths was as follows:—

Under one year	12
One and under two years	2
Over sixty-five years	1
Total	15

This gives a mortality of 1.14, and is far in excess of other years.

As is usual in such epidemics, the majority of deaths took place in the poorer quarters of the town. This is due in many cases to the improper feeding and care of the infants. Mothers will not take sufficient precautions to safeguard the baby's food against contamination by dust and flies. It is now a fairly well established fact that these two factors are the principal carriers of this disease. Previous to the receipt of the circular of the Local Government Board on August 18th, steps had been taken to prevent the spread. Extra men were employed, and all the common yards and alleys were cleansed daily and the sinks flushed with disinfectant. Frequent visits were made by myself and the inspector, and the inhabitants warned against allowing refuse to accumulate in corners and waste spaces. All the stables were visited, and the manure heaps removed frequently, and the pits limewashed as well as the stables. The ash pits at Railway Cottages were frequently cleansed and disinfected. In regard to educating the mothers of the poorer class on the subject of the care and feeding of infants, an excellent voluntary agency is at work in the town, known as the "Infants' Milk Club"; this is carried on by a small number of ladies on thoroughly practical lines. The mothers are assembled once a fortnight with their babies, and the progress of each child is noted. Practical lessons and demonstrations are given on feeding and clothing. Great importance is placed on the necessity of breast feeding; but, if through some physical defect, it is impossible for the mother to do this, milk is supplied. Clothing is also given—the parent having to contribute towards the cost. Jumble sales of old clothes are held for the members and the proceeds go for the purchase of milk and the upkeep of the organisation. The bulk of the funds is supplied by philanthropic people. The town is divided into districts and the ladies visit when the mothers are unable to attend the meetings. This institution is well organised and every effort is being made to teach the mothers self-reliance, thrift and the simple rules of cookery and domestic hygiene. Such an institution as this is doing a really good work, and the result of its efforts will in time show a decrease in infantile mortality.

Collection of House Refuse.

This, as heretofore, has been carried out by contract. Formerly the contract was let to two or more individuals each supplying one or more carts. This method rendered administration difficult and, in consequence, a new contract was entered into with one individual at a fixed sum per week, with the object of increasing the efficiency. This has to some extent been attained, but complaints are occasionally received as to irregularity of collection; on investigation some of these have proved to be groundless. The nature of the work makes it very difficult to obtain reliable men, and householders frequently have their gates barred when the dustman calls. No doubt the public can do much to help the Authority in their difficult task. For example, I have frequently called attention to the necessity of landlords providing covered ashbins. I regret to note that this custom, though on the increase, has not yet become universal. I observe many people, who ought to know better, still persist in using any old and filthy receptacle. If the authority does its best to provide an efficient service as is possible, having regard to expenditure, the least the inhabitants can do is to second their efforts to keep the town cleanly in this respect. I would again point out that the Authority have powers under the Public Health Acts to compel landlords to provide covered dustbins and that any person failing to comply with this can be prosecuted. In all 2,834 tons of refuse were conveyed to the destructor as compared with 3,171 tons last year. The decrease is accounted for by the fact that the destructor was out of action for some time, the cells having to be repaired.

Housing.

The number of new houses passed for occupation during the past year was 15. This shows a great decrease as compared with the previous two years when the numbers were 50 and 29 respectively. The houses built were all of the better class type. The Housing Committee on Workmen's Dwellings again gave a great deal of consideration to this question and I regret to say that no solution of this difficult problem has been arrived at. One site was offered at a certain figure by the Lord of the Manor; this was considered unsuitable. The committee selected another site, but the price asked for the land rendered any rate-aided scheme prohibitive. Negotiations have now been entered into with another landowner, and it is to be hoped that the negotiations of the committee will be more successful in this direction. That there is a need for houses for the labourer at a rent of 3s. to 3s. 6d., no one will deny. At present it is utterly useless to condemn and pull down houses which are known to be unhealthy, for the reason that the present inhabitants have nowhere to go. The only thing that can be done at present is to keep those houses in as good repair as possible. They are being continually inspected and on the discovery of defects notice is sent to the landlord to remedy the same, and this is always complied with. The whole crux of the housing problem in Falmouth for the lower classes is land value. Until this is satisfactorily dealt with at a fair and reasonable figure slum property is bound to remain as it is. The housing of the well-to-do artizan is good and ample for the needs of the Borough. Four cases of overcrowding were dealt with. All were remedied on serving informal notices.

Drainage and Sewage Disposal.

The principal event of the past year was the holding of an inquiry by the Local Government Board into the proposed scheme for draining the Gyllyngvase area. This received the sanction of the Board and the work is now well on the way towards completion, and promises to be finished before the commencement of the next summer season. The septic tanks have been somewhat delayed by the rough weather, but are now making good progress, and most of the sewers have been laid.

As some apprehension seems to exist in the public mind as to the method of dealing with the sewage adopted, I venture to give a brief description of how the modern septic tank works. Briefly the system is as close an imitation of nature as possible, and is another example of how science has again harnessed a natural agent for the benefit of mankind. Following on Pasteur's researches into the processes of fermentation and putrefaction, it has been proved that micro-organisms or bacteria play an important part in the disintegration or splitting up of organic matter, both vegetable and animal, and this fact is utilised on a scientific basis for the reduction of refuse and sewage into harmless byproducts. The success attending the dry earth system of closets and of sewage farming, had before this been illustrations of the bacteriological treatment of sewage, although the process had not hitherto been fully understood. It was previously assumed that the oxidation of decaying organic matter on the earth's surface was a chemical process, but now it has been proved that the upper layers of the soil teems with micro-organisms. These organisms feed on the decaying vegetable and organic matter, and split this up into simple oxidisable and comparatively harmless substances. In devising a scheme for the purification of sewage on modern methods, nature's process is imitated as far as possible. The septic tank is closed and the sewage which is not screened except of its grit, passes very slowly through the chambers of the tank. There is a very gradual deposition to the bottom of a large proportion of the solid organic matter, while small masses are carried to the surface by the gases of decomposition and form a leathery scum. In these upper and lower layers, which teem with micro-organisms, constant disintegration and liquefaction keeps pace with the constant addition of the undissolved matter. Gases are of necessity

evolved, but, owing to rapid oxidation, no offensive smells can be detected near. In a properly constructed tank very little residue is left, so complete has been the "process of combustion" by the micro-organisms, if one may use this term in reference to their action. No definite time can be assigned for the emptying of the residue, as this depends on the character of the sewage. Some tanks work for a year without requiring to be sludged, others go as long as ten. The effluent thus purified in the septic tank passes into another tank, where it is held up till such time as is suitable for its discharge on the ebb tide. The outfall pipe is carried out to sea, well beyond low water mark, and the discharge of the purified effluent is controlled by an ingenious automatic valve, worked by a bucket which fills and empties on the rise and fall of the tide. It is set so as to allow the fluid to pass through on the ebb tide only. This obviates any chance of it being washed back on the The advantages claimed for this method of sewage disposal are:—(1), the small amount of sludge produced; (2), an effluent of great purity; (3), reliability of working, and, therefore, very inexpensive; (4), freedom from nuisance. The system has been tried in many health resorts and has worked well. In fact, in one well-known resort on the east coast the tanks form part of the promenade. The tank has been designed by Mr. F. Cummin, London, and the work is being carried out under contract by Mr. R. May, London.

In regard to the disposal of the sewage on the harbour side of the town, the committee has given a great deal of thought and care. The question is one of long standing and one which will involve a large expenditure. The method of disposal is still under consideration and it is to be hoped that a solution of this difficult problem will be arrived at in the near future. As time goes on the difficulties of administration increase, owing to the increase of the population and the number of summer During the past season, special difficulties were encountered in keeping the beaches at Market Strand and Fish Strand Quay in a cleanly condition and necessitated the removal of about 460 tons of sludge. During the summer all the main drains and sinks were kept continually flushed.

Sale of Food and Drugs Act.

The Superintendent of Police informs me that nine samples were taken during the past year and forwarded to the County Analyst. All were good and no prosecutions instituted. Two samples of fish were seized and destroyed with the owner's consent.

Water Supply.

A great and much-needed improvement in the water supply has taken place during the past year. The Company have largely increased the capacity of the gathering ground, and the quality of the filter beds has been much improved. The result of this was, that in spite of the dry season, the supply was not curtailed for any purpose, domestic, sanitary or trade; a striking contrast to past seasons. The summary of last analysis was as follows: "The filtration of these samples is good, and I consider they represent water suitable for drinking purposes."—(Signed) Benedict Kitto.

Scavenging.

Last year the first experiment of tar spraying part of the main street was made, and so successful was the result that a tar sprayer has been purchased. During the coming season it is proposed to treat a greater amount of road surface, and this ought to do much to alleviate the dust nuisance and keep the streets cleanly during the summer. It is regrettable to note that more improvement has not taken place during the winter months. The amount of mud has been deplorable, not only in the main streets, but throughout the town generally, and I have received many complaints both from inhabitants and visitors. This condition cannot be conducive to the health and welfare of the town, and will prove detrimental in more ways than one. Every effort, therefore, ought to be put forward to improve the condition of affairs.

Cowsheds, Dairies, Bakehouses, Factories, &c.

There are seven registered cowsheds and seven dairies. They have been periodically visited, and are limewashed and kept in good condition. The sheds house 62 cows. There are twenty milk-shops, which were also visited, and literature and advice given as to the storage of milk. There are sixteen bakehouses, which have been visited; all the owners complied with the regulations and they are in good condition. The total number of factories and workshops is—factories, 21; workshops, 171. With the exception of one or two minor defects, which were remedied, all are in a satisfactory condition. The one laundry in the town is always in good condition, and the same may be said of the slaughter house. The only offensive trade carried on is tripe boiling. This is under strict supervision and no complaints have been received.

Summary of Work done by the Department.

The following extracts from the Sanitary Inspector's books will show the amount of detailed work accomplished during the past year:—

	8
927	Number of visits of inspection as the result of complaint or otherwise
81	Number of notices served for structural defects of houses
81	Number of notices served for other sanitary defects
162	Number of notices complied with
	Number of houses closed under Town
nil	Planning Act

Number demolished	1
Number of new w.c.'s provided	66
Number of new interceptors fixed	25
Number of new Doulton traps	150
Number of yards repaved	25
Number of houses visited as result of	
notifiable diseases	19
Number of specimens bacteriologically	
examined	17
During the nast summer owing to	the

During the past summer, owing to the exceptional drought, a large amount of work was thrown on the department. Extra men were employed to keep the lower parts of the town in a cleanly condition, and constant

visits were paid by the staff. Though the infantile mortality has risen, and in consequence the general death-rate, owing mainly to the epidemic of diarrhea, the health of the Borough has maintained its standard. The record of notifiable diseases still continues to be remarkably low, and I am glad to be able to state that only one case of Acute Poliomyelitis was brought under my notice.

In conclusion, I wish to tender my sincere thanks to the Sanitary Committee for the ready way in which they acceded to all my suggestions, and to the Sanitary Inspector and Staff for their devotion to duty in what was one of the most trying and anxious seasons of recent years.

I am,

Your obedient servant,

ALEX. GREGOR, M.D.,

Medical Officer of Health.

TABLE I.

FALMOUTH URBAN DISTRICT.

Vital Statistics of Whole District during 1911 and previous Years.

	to		BIRTHS.	TOTAL DE REGISTERE THE DIST			TRANSF DEA	ERABLE THS.	NETT DEATHS BELONGING TO THE DISTRICT.				
	mated	aber.	Ne	tt.			its he	not the	Under of A	1 Year Age.	At all Ages.		
YEAR.	Population estimated to Middle of each Year.	Uncorrected Number.	Number.	Rate.	Number.	Rate.	Of Non-residents registered in the District.	Of Residents n registered in t District.	Number.	Rate per 1,000 Nett Births.	Number.	Rate.	
190	3 11,800		266	22.5	200	16.9			34	127.8			
190	7 11,800		223	18.8	180	15.2			20	86.9			
190	8 11,789		264	22.3	178	15.09			23	87.1			
190	9 11,789		241	20.44	182	15.43			21	87.13			
191	0 11,789		245	20.78	184	15.6			21	85.71	183	15.5	
-								No.		,			
191	1 13,136	234	234	17 8	228	17:35	25	10	41	175-21	203	15.45	

Area of District in acres (exclusive of area covered by water), 857 acres.

Total population at all ages, 13,136.

Number of inhabitated houses, 2,525.

Average number of persons per house, 5.2.

FALMOUTH URBAN DISTRICT.

Cases of Infectious Diseases Notified during the Year 1911.

		NUMBER OF CASES NOTIFIED.								
NOTIFIABLE DISEASE.		At Ages—Years.								
	At all Ages.	Under 1	1 to 5	5 to 15	15 to 25	25 to 45	45 to 65	65 and upwards	Total cases removed to Hospital.	
Small Pox	•••		•••	•••			•••	• •	•••	
Cholera			•••		••	•••	• & •	•••		
Diphtheria (including Membranous Croup	5	•••	1	3	•••	•••	1	•••	• • •	
Erysipelas	3		• • •	•••		•••	2	1	• • •	
Scarlet Fever	7		•••	4	2	u * *	1	•••	2	
Typhus Fever	•••	•••		• • •	•••	•••	•••	• • •		
Enteric Fever	3		• • •	2	1		•••	• • •		
Relapsing Fever			• • •	• • •		n • •	• • •	• • •	•••	
Continued Fever	1	• • •	• • •	• • •	• • •		1		• • •	
Puerperal Fever	• • •		• • •		• • •	• • •		•••	*** *	
Plague			• • •	• • •	•••		•••	• • •		
Under Tuberculosis Regulations, 1908 Under Tuberculosis	1	٠			• • •	1	• • •	e • 1		
Regulations, 1911 Others		•••	•••	•••	•••	•••	•••	•••	•••	
Totals	20	• • •	1	9	3	1	5	1	2	

Isolation Hospital—Name and Situation:—Falmouth Isolation Hospital, Kergilliack.

Total available beds, 8. Number of Diseases that can be concurrently treated, 2.

FALMOUTH URBAN DISTRICT.

Causes of, and Ages at Death during the Year 1911.

NETT DEATHS AT THE SUBJOINED AGES OF "RESIDENTS" WHETHER OCCURRING WITHIN OR WITHOUT THE DISTRICT.										ths whe- esidents' esidents' tutions
CAUSES OF DEATH.	ALL AGES.	Under 1 year.	1 and under 2 years.	2 and under 5 years.	5 and under 15 years.	15 and under 25 years.	25 and under 45 years.	45 and under 65 years.	65 and up-	Total Deat ther of 'Re or 'non-Re in Instit in the Di
All Cases Certified Uncertified	202			•••			•••	• • •	• • •	• • •
										•
Enteric Fever										
Small Pox	• • •	a • •	• •	•	•••	• • •		• • •	• • •	
Measles	• • •				• • • •	• • •		• • •		
Scarlet Fever	1 4			• • •	•••			• • •		
Whooping Cough	11	8	3			• • •	• • •			
Diptheria and Croup	1	• • •	• • •	•••	1		• • •			
Influenza	2	• • •				• • •		2	٠	• • •
Erysipelas	1	• • •	• • •	•••	• • •	• • •	• • •		1	• • •
Cerebro-Spinal Fever Phthisis (Pulmonary	• • •		•••	• • •	· · · ·	•••				••
m 1 1 ' \	11				1	1	5	4		
Tuberculosis) Tuberculous Meningitis	1	• • •	• • •	* * *	1	1			•••	• • •
Other Tuberculous Diseases	1.	• • •		•••	1	• • •	1		• • •	• • •
Rheumatic Fever	1		•••	• • •	• • •	* * *		•••	•••	
Cancer, malignant disease	13			• •	• • •		4	5	4	2
Bronchitis	$\frac{10}{23}$	5	2						16	~
Broncho-Pneumonia	7	3	3			1				
Pneumonia (all other forms)	5							1	4	* * *
Other Diseases of Respiratory										, ,
Organs	3				1		1		1	
Diarrhœa and Enteritis	15	12	2			٠.			1	
Appendicitis and Typhlitis	1		• • • •					1		
Alcoholism	1							1		1
Cirrhosis of Liver	2		• • •]	1	
Nephritis and Bright's										
Disease	5	1			1	• • •		2	1	
Puerperal Fever	• • •									
Other Accidents and Diseases										
of Pregnancy and	0					-1				
Parturition	3	• • •		• • •	•••	. 1	2	• • •	• • •	* * *
Congenital Debility and Malformation, including										
Premature Birth	12	10						1		
Violent Deaths, excluding		12		• • •		•••		4 %	• •	* • *
Suicide	1					1				2
Suicides	1	•••	• • •		• • •		1		• • •	44
Other Defined Diseases	44				3	2	2	16	21	4
Diseases ill-defined or	-1, -4.	• • •				444	-	10	Avail . L.	1
unknown	41		1		•••		2	5	31	1
	203	41	11		8	6	18	38	81	10

INFANTILE MORTALITY DURING THE YEAR 1911.

Nett Deaths from stated causes at various Ages under 1 Year of Age.

All Causes Certified Cincertified Cincertif	CAUSE OF DEATH.	Under 1 Week.	1-2 Weeks.	2-3 Weeks.	3-4 Weeks.	Total under 1 month.	1-3 Months.	3-6 Months.	6-9 Months.	9-12 Months.	Total Deaths under 1 Year.
Chicken-pox Measles Chicken-pox Chic	All Causes { Certified Uncertified										
5 1 3 1 10 5 11 8 7 41	Chicken-pox Measles Scarlet Fever Diphtheria and Croup Whooping-cough Diarrhœa Enteritis Tuberculous Meningitis Abdominal Tuberculous Other Tuberculous Diseases. Congenital Malformations Premature Birth Atrophy, Debility and Marasmus Atelectasis Injury at Birth Erysipelas Syphilis Rickets Meningitis (not Tuberculous) Convulsions Gastritis Laryngitis Bronchitis Pneumonia (all forms) Suffocation, overlying	2 2 			1	 1 1 2 5 		1 * · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	1 		8 3 9 1 2 9

Nett Births in the year

{ legitimate, 223 } illegitimate, 11

Nett Deaths in the year of { legitimate infants, 37 illegitimate infants, 4

